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SUBJECT: GUIDANCE FOR UNSC RESOLUTION 1701 CONSULTATION,
MARCH 10

¶1. (U) This is an action request. USUN may draw from the points in para 2 below during UNSC resolution 1701 consultations, currently scheduled for March 10. End action request:

¶2. (U) Begin points.

-- We welcome the Secretary General's report and the briefing by Mr. Pedersen on the implementation of resolution ¶1701.

-- Before I begin discussing implementation of UNSC resolution 1701, I would like to reiterate our concern that it has not yet been possible to hold a presidential election in Lebanon. The United States urges the Lebanese to move quickly to pave the way for a president to be elected. Although the Lebanese have agreed on a candidate, we are concerned that Syria and its allies within Lebanon are using other preconditions to further perpetuate the political stalemate. However, until such time as a new president takes office, the United States has full confidence in, and fully supports, the legitimate Lebanese Government in managing the affairs of the state and in continuing to provide security through the Lebanese Armed Forces.

-- I would also like to observe that, since the last report on UNSCR 1701, Lebanon has witnessed two more political assassinations: That of Lebanese Armed Forces Brigadier General Francois al-Hajj on December 12, 2007 and that of Internal Security Forces Captain Wissam Eid on January 25, ¶2008. It is appalling that these kinds of political assassinations continue to occur with impunity in Lebanon three years after the assassination of former PM Rafik Hariri and almost a year after the Council passed resolution 1757 to establish the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

-- I wish to make seven main points about the situation in Lebanon as it relates to the provisions of resolution 1701.

-- First, the U.S. remains deeply concerned about illegal arms transfers across the Syrian-Lebanese border in contravention of UNSCR 1701. I note that Hizballah claims it has replenished its military arsenal since the 2006 war. We fully support the Secretary General's call for a process to disarm all militias in Lebanon in accordance with resolution 1559 and the Ta'if Accords. As the Secretary General reports, Hizballah has not denied reports that it is conducting training and constructing new facilities in the Bekaa valley and north of the Litani River. In accordance with resolutions 1559 and 1680 of this Council, Hizballah must disarm, and it must do so now.

-- Hizballah's statements stand in stark contrast to Syrian claims that allegations of weapons smuggling across the

Syrian-Lebanon border are motivated by political rather than security considerations. We strongly support the Secretary General's observation, which he has made for the fifth time since last summer's war, that Syria and Iran have a particular responsibility to ensure that the arms embargo in resolution 1701 is fully respected.

-- Second, the U.S. shares the Secretary General's concerns that militias such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command and Fatah al-Intifada maintain heavily armed military positions along the Syria-Lebanon border. As the report notes, the existence of these positions pose a direct and continuing challenge to the sovereignty of Lebanon. The U.S. joins with the Secretary General in calling again for full border delineation between Lebanon and Syria. We note that meetings between Syrian and Lebanese border control officials did not address the issue of border delineation, despite Syria's claims.

-- Third, although the Syrian-Lebanese border can only be secured when all regional states decide to honor their commitments under resolution 1701, the recommendations of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team (LIBAT) serve as a blueprint for increasing Lebanon's border security capacity. We are encouraged that Lebanon has made progress in implementing these recommendations and welcome the Secretary General's proposal for a follow-on mission. The U.S. stands ready to assist this assessment team. We would also like to encourage the UN assessment team to liaise with the German-led border project.

-- Fourth, we commend UNIFIL and the troops serving in it for their efforts to carry out their mandate. We want to highlight in particular the close working relationship General Graziano and his team have established with the Lebanese Armed Forces. We call for further support for UNIFIL's quick impact projects in the south that are essential for UNIFIL to build confidence and support among the local population. The U.S. supports UNIFIL's plans for mitigating risks to its personnel in the wake of recent terrorist attacks and continuous threats.

-- Fifth, we commend the LAF and other Lebanese security services for their professionalism in the face of daunting political and security challenges. We share the Secretary General's concern that the Lebanese Armed Forces are stretched too thin and encourage Member States to support the LAF by providing funding and materiel. The United States has already committed \$371 million in grant assistance to the LAF, but this meets only a portion of their needs.

-- Sixth, we welcome the commitment of both Lebanon and Israel to the full implementation of resolution 1701. We urge all sides to accelerate trilateral efforts to find an early resolution to the issue of Ghajjar, to address the issue of unexploded ordnance in south Lebanon, and to mark and ensure full respect for the Blue Line.

-- Finally, we deeply regret Hizballah's continual refusal to provide any information about the two abducted Israeli soldiers, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser. We are appalled that Hizballah is placing conditions and demands for their release that are outside the scope of 1701. We reiterate our call on Hizballah to immediately and unconditionally release them.

-- While much has been accomplished towards implementing the Council's decree in UNSC resolution 1701, much more remains to be achieved. We must all recommit ourselves to ensuring that resolution 1701 is fully implemented, including compliance with the arms embargo, release of soldiers, and progress towards disarmament. The United States stands ready to do its part towards this goal.

End points.
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